



Governor's Rural and Regional Development Conference Luncheon

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
Wigwam Resort
Litchfield Park, Arizona
Friday, August 28, 2009

Thank you very much, Don.

And thank you for organizing this important gathering.

I do appreciate the fact that you all have come to the Wigwam today, because you are interested in Arizona's future.

In the current economy, it can be difficult to justify coming together, but I am glad to see so many of you here today.

The issues discussed at this conference are critical to three specific things:

Digging our state and each community out of the recession,

Putting Arizonans back to work,

and building a stronger, more diverse economy.
Economic Development is our pathway.

For some time now, the state has been playing four quarters of the game with DEFENSE – and no OFFENSE.

Which is precisely why I appointed Don Cardon as Director of Commerce.

Not only is he a great quarterback, he knows how to run the no-huddle offense.

He has wasted little time in reorganizing the Department, not simply as a result of budget implications, but, instead, in response to what his agency must be for Arizona.

It has already become more credible with the business community, our local governments and the Legislature.

It is focused.

Gone is the day of Commerce's ambiguous mission and limited results.

It is efficient.

Duplications have been eliminated. It is aggressive.

Because the game clock is ticking.

Just last week we saw Arizona's unemployment rate soar to 9-point-2 percent.

State revenue is declining.

The big three -- individual income -- corporate income -- and sales -- were down 21-point-4 percent for fiscal year 2009.

The most recent month recorded -- from May to June -- was down nearly 19-percent.

We also are seeing less movement by companies in the current economy.

Businesses moving into the state or Arizona and businesses expanding operations fell 38 percent based on tracking at the Department of Commerce.

I have always said that cutting is not the way to prosperity -- nor is raising taxes.

We have been backed into a corner -- short-term we must act to tackle the current realities.

That is why I have stood firm.

We must give Arizonans opportunity to decide if they will approve a temporary 1-percent tax to stabilize the state economy, and protect critical resources for our most vulnerable.

I trust the voters. And so should our legislators.

Please don't misinterpret these moves as my vision for how the State should grow.

While the world economy has undergone seismic changes in the last 15 years, Arizona's economic development structure has changed little.

We must position Arizona to compete globally.

We must better align and integrate our economic development functions.

We must build economic diversity that is better aligned to Arizona's sustainable niches.

We need a new model for economic development.

The time to act – aggressively – is right now.

We are going to commit to -- and invest in -- economic development.

So, I have assembled a team to examine opportunities that fit Arizona and its unique businesses and communities.

This team will call on the expertise of the Arizona Economic Resource Organization – working with our state's top CEOs and our universities.

I have asked Sarah Dial and Associates to lead this effort.

Within the next 60 days, you will learn more about this team and immediate steps to advance economic development -- ensure Arizona is credible – and aggressively enhance our competitiveness in the global market.

You have heard many calls to action before – so, please, do not take mine lightly.

This truly is the moment to act.

I look forward to your support and engagement as we develop a new model for Arizona.

Thank you again for being here -- for being a member of the Arizona team -- for your dedication to WINNING -- for our families -- and our future.

Thank you.